



December 22, 2020

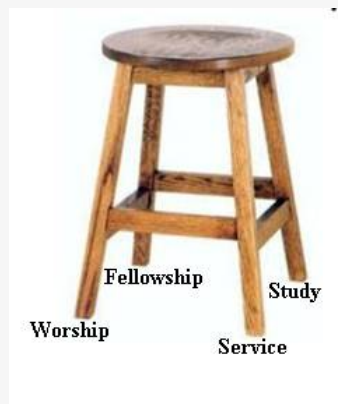
CC's: Curt's Contemplations



Advent, the season just before Christmas, is a season for preparing our hearts and minds for Christ. Such preparation happens all year round, of course, and is central to developing spiritual health throughout life. However, giving

preparation special focus for a season helps us avoid the temptation of procrastinating, and never getting around to preparation—this essential component to spiritual health. During this pandemic year, when we have to do so many things in abnormal ways, we have an opportunity to think about our spiritual priorities with fresh eyes.

One way that I have used for preparing evaluating the spiritual disciplines in my own life, as well as those in the churches I serve, has been the four-legged stool metaphor borrowed from *Walk to Emmaus*. A four-legged stool is particularly stable, and can be sat upon with confidence. In the same way, for principles for a healthy spiritual life are to build lives that focus on the following: *worship, study, fellowship, and outreach*.



1. Worship!

Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!-

Psalm 95:6

Many people think of worship as the thing we do in church on Sunday. Truly, worship is much more than that. Worship is an attitude we bring to all of life, that all of God's creation was created by God on purpose, and that each moment is a moment with God, full of potential for sharing God's grace. Also, recognizing that all relationships that matter require care, worship is a key activity for caring for our relationship with God and with our fellow Christians.

Personal worship keeps us grounded in our own relationship with God, despite the distractions that come in good times, and despite the feeling of spiritual distance that comes in bad times. Corporate

worship (worship with others) is essential, both because God commanded it, and because God's nature is love (1 John 4:8). Created in God's image, we are called to love one another through participating in worship, fellowship and outreach with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

In this pandemic year, when our normal routines of life and worship are so disrupted, some people are finding old patterns no longer work. How are you caring for your own relationship with God and with others in your congregation? How is your church adapting to keep corporate worship alive in your own congregational fellowship?

2. Fellowship!

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing. - 1 Thess. 5:11

Social distancing and hunkering down forced by the coronavirus has increased the amount of people suffering real and significant isolation. Unfortunately, depression, addiction, anxiety, cognitive decline, and nearly all other social ills are drastically increased by the lack of healthy contact with others. Further, a sense of isolation also increases a person's sense of dissatisfaction with family members and others, increasing the probability of abusive or violent actions when with others. One of the most effective ways to help someone showing signs of these various social ills is to help them increase their healthy and meaningful contacts with others.

Similarly, our spiritual lives suffer when we lack healthy and meaningful interaction with others from the family of God. What actions has your congregation taken to help people remain connected during this pandemic? What new or extra efforts are you taking to make sure you remain connected, and that you reach out to others in your life to help them?

3. Service!

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. - Matt 20:28

For many, it is always a temptation to keep a very introverted form of the Christian faith. Indeed, some of us are introverts. Even so, real Christian life is about serving as God's image, and Jesus was adamant that we are here to serve, not to be served. Though introverts are usually capable of doing extroverted things for a time, even though such service exhausts them quickly, there are also forms of essential service that particularly fit introverts. Living in the service of others is to be our way of life, whoever we are (see also Ephesians 2:8-10).

What kind of service particularly engages your congregation these days? What kind of service would you be willing to help with through your church?

4. Study!

Be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God. - Rom 12:2b

Only God is complete. The rest of us are engaged in observing, evaluating and responding to what we are learning all the time. Healthy spirituality asks us to be intentional about our learning, focusing on explicitly Christian studies (certainly the Bible, but also other Christian literature) but also engaging in studying things that

cause us to grow—anything from auto mechanics, to one's own Native language.

Part of our Christian study should also be in the service of increasing our witness in Jesus Christ, particularly through the church. What kind of study would help inform your congregation's service ministry?

One More...Social Justice!

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed; defend the orphan, and plead for the widow. - Isaiah 1:17

Traditionally, Presbyterians, like many protestants, have added one more principle to healthy Christian life. Presbyterians lift up the ongoing biblical witness that human sin consistently tempts us toward tyranny. That being the case, social justice is an ongoing theme, both in the bible and for those churches that came out of the reformation.

Every generation, including ours, must deal with the current issues of injustice that emerge among us. For this reason, our presbytery has taken a stand against injustice that persists because of how the old history (Google Doctrine of Discovery!) affected Alaska Natives, African Americans, and so many others. This is why we insist that the principle that *all lives matter* must take into account the reality that many lives face systemic, ongoing injustice. *All lives matter* means nothing unless *Black Lives Matter*, and *Alaska Native Lives Matter*, as much as those of our sisters and brothers from the majority culture.

How does your congregation encourage improved opportunities for the poor, the imprisoned, the homeless, and those left behind (or left out) in the current system?

Listing of Christmas Celebrations

Christmas Eve and Christmas worship are meant to be celebrations. How do we celebrate in ways that demonstrate *loving our neighbor* during a pandemic? Presbytery of Yukon congregations are considering a number of options. When we asked, we received the following responses (note that a few churches did not send their response in time).

First Presbyterian Church of Wasilla

Pre-recorded their Christmas Eve worship service, to be posted [here, on their Facebook page](#) on Christmas Eve, and will remain available on their Facebook site.

Chapel in the Mts., Anaktuvuk Pass

The church building is being used by the community as a COVID quarantine site, and so no services will be held this year.

University Community Presbyterian Church

Candlelight worship on Christmas-Eve will be in the church at 9 p.m. The service will also be posted here, on [UCPC's Facebook](#), and also [here on YouTube](#), afterward.

North Pole Presbyterian/Faith Lutheran Church

Will hold two carefully social distanced services on Christmas Eve at 3:00 and 6:00 p.m. Please call to help the social distancing with your RSVP at (907) 388-9685.

Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church

Will have livestream services for Christmas, and will also livestream a traditional New Years' Eve *Watchnight Service*, available [here on their YouTube site](#).

Immanuel Presbyterian Church, Anchorage

Christmas Eve worship at 7:00pm on Zoom. [Email ipcanchorage@yahoo.com](mailto:ipcanchorage@yahoo.com) for their Zoom link.

Olgonik Presbyterian Church, Wainwright

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service at 7:00 p.m. at the church.
Christmas Day feast at 1:00 p.m., the doors will open at noon.

Trinity Presbyterian Church, Anchorage

Christmas Eve service will be held live in the parking lot at Trinity at 7 p.m.

First Korean Presbyterian Church, Anchorage

Christmas day worship will be held in the church at 11:00 a.m., Christmas Day.

Gambell Presbyterian Church

Christmas Songs, in the church on Christmas Day (time TBA). No gift exchange to limit COVID exposure.

United Protestant (Presbyterian) Church, Palmer

United Protestant Church is pre-recording the Christmas Eve service, and posting it both [here on YouTube](#), and [here on their Facebook Page](#). Households are encouraged to worship at the time of their choosing.

Jewel Lake Parish, Anchorage

An outdoor service will be held in front of the church at 7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve. Participants should wear a mask.

Eagle River Presbyterian Church

A brief Christmas Eve service will be held in the parking lot at 7:00 p.m. A pre-recorded Christmas Eve service will be posted [here, on their Facebook site](#) that night.

To access local information about Sunday worship, made available by congregations of the presbytery, [click here](#).

Featured Worship Schedule

Presbytery of Yukon

<https://www.facebook.com/PresbyteryofYukon>

<u>Date</u>	<u>Church Featured on PoY FB Page</u>	<u>How to Find Their Online Worship Every Week</u>
11/15/20	First Presbyterian Church of Wasilla	https://www.facebook.com/FirstPresWasilla
12/13/20	Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9jCWvBxp-PDd_Jn5vii2Xw
12/20/20	Univ. Comm. Presb., Fairbanks	https://ucpcfairbanks.org/services
12/27/20	Jewel Lake Parish	https://jlp.church/
1/3/21	United Protestant, Palmer, AK	https://www.facebook.com/PalmerLogChurch
1/10/21	Eagle River Presbyterian Church	https://www.facebook.com/ERPresbyterianChurch
1/17/21	First Presbyterian Church, Anchorage	https://www.facebook.com/First-Presbyterian-Church-of-Anchorage-Alaska-152768168262144
1/28/21	Trinity Presbyterian Church, ANC	https://www.facebook.com/trinityanchorage



Delta Jct. – Faith Lutheran Church
Lighting the Advent Candles, 12/20/2020

Fun Faith Ideas for Kids



Even before the pandemic, fewer children were attending Sunday School than in past decades. Since the pandemic started keeping young people home, however, more and more parents have been exploring their own faith, which has also led more to seek out online content for their children.

Presbyterian Outlook is a denominational magazine that offers both online and print formats. The May 9 issue featured resources for kids of different ages. The online version includes links to home Sunday School offerings, books, youth group resources and more. As parents (and other adults in the household) are trying to help kids to thrive in this stay-at-home time, resources for activities that are fun AND build faith are precious. [To access the article online, click here.](#)

In our presbytery, a number of churches have been providing at home curricula for children. Many have made a point of continuing the children's moment sections of worship in their new, online Sunday worship services.

Be Thou My Protective Barrier: Home Children's Bible Lesson for the Pandemic

It is important for adults to find effective ways to talk to their children about the pandemic. Presbyterian Outlook offers a children's Bible Study to help see how our faith can support us in relevant ways right now, during the pandemic. [To access this Bible Study, click here.](#)

Adult Bible Studies Online

Most churches have moved their Bible studies online. Be sure to check with your local congregation if you are looking for their listings. However, two adult groups are currently serving multiple congregations in the presbytery. Both use the Zoom platform for their meetings, which allows people to join either through digital video connections, or through audio telephone connections. If you are interested you can find the connection information as follows:

- Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church's 7:00 p.m. Thursday Women's Bible Study, led by Rev. Wendy Christianson, is open to women from across the Native Ministries region. If you wish to join, you can request the Zoom meeting information through Utqiagvik Presbyterian Church at (907) 852-6566.
 - The Presbytery of Yukon's 7:30 p.m. Wednesday Service uses a prayer service format that also includes Bible Study. Everyone is welcome. If you wish to join, you can request the Zoom meeting information by leaving a message at 907-276-0914, or office@pbyukon.org.
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Financial Secretary Needed

The presbytery is in need of a new financial secretary. This is a part-time job, with flexible hours, ranging from 30-50 hours/month. A CPA license or an accounting degree is not required, but knowledge of Quickbooks would be helpful.

Please advertise this job opening across your churches. We would love to hire from our membership, though that is not essential for the job. The sooner we can find a new financial secretary, the better the chances that they will have time to receive training in the job. Resumes and inquiries should be sent to exec@pbyukon.org.

Financial Secretary Responsibilities:

1. Responsible for day-to-day financial matters, such as:
 - a. Pay bills and reimburse expenses
 - b. Payroll
 - c. Deposits
 - d. Send out receipts for gifts
 - e. Bill receivables
 2. Provide monthly financial reports to the Leadership Team
 3. Provide quarterly reports of church giving
 4. Maintain Hillcrest loan records
 5. Serve as resource person to the Stewardship Committee
 6. Attend Leadership Team meetings and stated meetings of the presbytery
 7. Make available all records to assist the auditor in reviewing financial records
 8. And other duties as assigned, including some administrative office work
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Prayer Requests

Continued prayers for our Alaska communities and those around the world during the Covid pandemic.



Mark Your Calendars

December 25, 2020



Christmas

The presbytery office will be closed in observance of the Christmas holiday.

January 1, 2021



New Year's Day

The presbytery office will be closed in observance of New Year's Day.

February 2021

Winter Stated Meeting of the Presbytery
Virtual Meeting

Presbytery of Yukon
616 W. 10th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99577
907-276-0914



www.pbyukon.org